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AUTHOR Wang, Peter
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ABSTRACT

A report by the California State Department of Education described the impact of a major change in student ethnic enrollment throughout the state. Not only has there been an increase in the numbers of minority students, but there have also been shifts in the concentration of minority students and increases in the number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. These changes have posed problems for school districts such as the need to avoid racial or ethnic segregation, and the need for multicultural education and affirmative action employment programs. Increased racial tension, limited resources to effect changes, inability to deal with the needs of minority students, and difficulty in meeting the needs of LEP students are also identified as problems. Among the alternatives available to assist school districts in coping with the new trend are: (1) establishment of a formula so that school districts can financially meet the needs of a changing student population; (2) efforts on the part of schools of education to recruit students who will obtain bilingual teaching credentials; (3) provisions of inservice programs for school personnel; (4) establishment of newcomer centers for non-English speaking students; (5) development of magnet schools with specialized foci; and (6) development of a flexible policy for dealing with the credentials of bilingual teachers. (MK)

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THE CHANGING ETHNIC POPULATION AND ITS IMPACT ON SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN CALIFORNIA

By

Peter Wang
Consultant
California State Department of Education

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THE CHANGING ETHNIC POPULATION AND ITS IMPACT ON SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN CALIFORNIA[1]

by Peter Wang
Consultant
California State Department of Education

The report, "Racial and Ethnic Distribution of Students and Staff in California Public Schools, Fall, 1979", by California State Department of Education[2], indicates a great change in the student ethnic enrollment throughout the state. This demographic change is having a profound impact on school districts; they are being forced to make many adjustments in order to be in compliance with the many state and federal regulations, in addition to addressing major curriculum and instructional problems. This paper is intended to point out the significance of demographic changes, to discuss the problems that the districts are facing, and to suggest alternatives to solve some of these problems.

I. Significance of Demographic Change

a). Increase of Minority Students

In fall 1967, the state survey indicated 25% of the total student population were minority students. In fall 1979, the state survey found 40% of the four million students in California public schools were minority students. The following is a comparison of 1967 to 1979 from the survey.[3]

	American Indian	Asian	Filipino	Black	Hispanic	White	Total
Fall 1967	13,195	91,455	30,141	372,150	616,226	3,308,828	4,431,995
Percent	0.3	2.1	0.7	8.4	13.9	74.7	
Fall 1979	36,794	172,956	57,917	405,938	953,295	2,441,120	4,068,020
Percent	0.9	4.3	1.4	10	23.4	60	

For more detail information, one may consult the original document.[2]

With the increase of minority students, the number of school districts with minority students as majority also increased.[4] Compare the following figures:

	Number of Schools	Number of Districts
Fall 1967	987	212
Fall 1979	1,943	287

b). Concentration of Minority Students

Another feature of the demographic change is the concentration of the minority students. 93 percent of them attended schools in the 22 counties

of the standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSAs); 57 percent attended schools in the 46 largest districts (those reporting 15,000 or more students). These schools enrolled 88 percent of all public school students in the state.[5]

c). Increase of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students

The above report does not include the number of the LEP students. The number of LEP students also increased. Compare the following figures.[6]

1975	233,520[7]
Spring 1979	288,427[8]
Spring 1980	325,748[9]

II. Problems Faced by School Districts with Demographic Change

With the increase of minority students, many school districts are required by state regulations (Sections 90-101, California Administrative Code, Title 5) to avoid racial or ethnic segregation of minority students. The report by the Office of Intergroup Relations explains very clearly its responsibility in helping school districts stay in compliance with the regulations. It further points out the great need for multicultural education and affirmative action in employment to overcome the effects of racial and ethnic isolation. The report concentrates primarily on racial isolation. There are many other problems facing school districts with changing ethnic populations. One difficulty is that a group of minority students leave and another group of minority students with different needs arrive. For example; examine and compare Compton and Lynwood Unified School District student population between 1973 and 1979:[10]

Compton Unified School District

	American Indian	Asian	Filipino	Black	White	Hispanic	Total
1973[11]	35	54		30,453		3481	34,523
Percent	0.1	0.2		88.2		10.1	
1979	6	440	13	22,504	142	6382	29,485
Percent	0.02	1.49	0.04	76.32	0.48	21.64	

Lynwood Unified School District

	American Indian	Asian	Filipino	Black	White	Hispanic	Total
1973	84	51		2,305		2,456	3,493
Percent	1.0	0.6		27.1		29	
1979	65	24	461	4,496	715	4,734	10,495
Percent	0.62	0.23	4.36	42.84	6.81	45.11	

In the Compton School District, the number of Black students have dwindled from 88.2% in 1973 to 76.32% in 1979. In the same period, the number of Hispanic students have increased from 10.1% to 21.64%. A total of 3,970 were identified as LEP students in the Spring 1979. In Spring 1980, the number of LEP students jumped to 5,078.

In the Lynwood Unified School District, the number of Black students in 1973 were 27.1%. They increased to 42.84%. During the same period, the Hispanic students increased from 29% to 45.11%. In Spring 1979, a total of 2008 students were identified as LEP students; in Spring 1980, the number increased to 2,416. Compare the following figures in chart form:

Compton Unified School District

Hispanic Students	1973	3,481			
	1979	6,380	LEP Students	1979 Spring	3,970
				1980 Spring	5,078

Lynwood Unified School District

Hispanic Students	1973	2,465			
	1979	4,734	LEP Students	1979 Spring	2,008
				1980 Spring	2,416

In both school districts, the LEP students increased rapidly in the last two years. Most of the LEP students in these two school districts are mostly Spanish speaking students. As a result, there are many teachers on waivers as required by the state bilingual law. Compare the following figures:

Compton Unified School District

Number of Bilingual Teachers Needed And Teachers on Waiver[12]

	The Number of Bilingual Teachers Needed as Reported by District	The Number of Teachers with Bilingual Credential	The Number of Teachers on Waiver
1978-79			29
1979-80	166	3	163
1980-81	210	*[13]	*[13]

Lynwood Unified School District

Number of Bilingual Teachers Needed And Teachers on Waiver

	The Number of Bilingual Teachers Needed as Reported by District	The Number of Teachers with Bilingual Credential	The Number of Teachers on Waiver
1978-79			57
1979-80	65	5	60
1980-81	117	29	84

Not only Black and Hispanic students have increased, Asian students have increased also. In Alhambra City Elementary and High School Districts, the number of Asian students has increased rapidly in the last few years. Compare the following figures in Alhambra City Elementary and High School Districts:

Alhambra City Elementary School District

	American Indian	Asian	Filipino	Black	White	Hispanic	Total
1973	12	1,296		43		3,213	8,781
Percent	0.1	14.8		0.5		36.6	
1979	5	2,092	107	53	2,424	3,686	8,367
Percent	0.06	25	1.28	0.63	28.97	44.05	

Number of LEP Students

1979 Spring	1181
1980 Spring	1704

Alhambra City High School District

	American Indian	Asian	Filipino	Black	White	Hispanic	Total
1973	8	732		25		3,064	8,792
Percent	0.1	8.3		0.3		34.8	
1979	5	1,600	69	33	2,638	3,477	7,822
Percent	0.06	20.46	0.88	0.42	33.73	44.45	

Number of LEP Students

1979 Spring	656
1980 Spring	1228

Alhambra City Elementary School District reported six teachers on waiver in 1978-79. In 1980- 81, it reported that it needed forty-five bilingual teachers and had forty-five bilingual teachers with bilingual credentials.

It is important to note that the number of teachers on waiver has increased throughout the state. Compare the following figures:

Number of Teachers on Waiver[14]

1977-78	4,665 Teachers on Waiver
1979-80	4,788 Teachers Applying for Waiver

Of the 4,788 teachers applying for waiver in 1979-80, only 2,300 were approved. It means that 2,488 classes were out of compliance with state bilingual requirements.

In Huntington Beach Union High School District, there is a different change from the above mentioned school districts. Compare the following figures in Huntington Beach Union High School District where there is a reduction of Hispanic students, and an increase of Asian students:

	American Indian	Asian	Filipino	Black	White	Hispanic	Total
1973		271		23		1,317	18,161
Percent		1.4		0.1		1.0	
1979	79	976	12	63	17,693	950	19,145
Percent	0.04	4.92	0.41	0.33	89.16	4.79	

The changing student population has the following impact on the school districts:

a). Racial Tension

The above figures indicate that one ethnic group of students that generated funds to hire resource teachers or aides or regular teachers because of affirmative action plans are gone, while a different ethnic group of students has enrolled. They have different needs which the previously employed teachers cannot meet. But the districts cannot just lay off those teachers and hire new ones who have special expertise to meet the needs of the in coming students. It means that the funds that are generated by the in coming students cannot be used to meet their needs. This problem causes racial tension among different communities and teachers. This situation can happen to teachers of any racial backgrounds. For example, when a district has less Spanish speaking LEP students and increased Asian LEP students, the Spanish bilingual teachers are assigned to teach the Asian LEP students. The Spanish skills of the teachers do not help very much with the Vietnamese or Cantonese speaking students.

b). Limited Resources

Many school districts do not have resources to cope with the changing population as a result, the following situations has occured:

1). The majority of school districts give more attention to desegregation than the needs of the LEP students. The newly arrived refugee students were integrated into regular classes under "individualized instruction". Since these students do not speak much English, and do not know the American culture, they are isolated even in an integrated school. Integration does not benefit them at this point in time. At the same time, many of the teachers do not know the background and culture of the students; therefore, they cannot teach them effectively. Most teachers take care of the majority students in the class and have little time for personal attention to these newly arrived students. Then, these teachers are labeled insensitive, racist or incompetent.

2). It was found that one junior high school put the newly arrived refugee students into the Spanish class. Their parents raised the question at three parent advisery committee meetings without getting any result. These students can hardly write one complete English sentence.

3). In order to comply with the state bilingual requirements, one district assigned high school bilingual teachers with bilingual certificates of competence to elementary schools. High school bilingual teachers are not required to get bilingual certificate. These teachers thought it an asset and passed an examination to get it. It suddenly turns into a liability. This solution caused serious morale problems for these bilingual teachers. At the same time, the LEP students in high school were neglected.

4). School counselors do not understand the adjustment problems of these students and do not communicate very well with them. Furthermore, they do not have the time to spend on each LEP student. They simply put them in classes where there is lower enrollment.

5). Some districts group those LEP students who failed the district proficiency tests with the students who were born here and grew up in this public education system. Many of these LEP students need survival English. Survival English at this point is more important than a high school diploma. And their

needs are definitely different from those who were born and grew up here. Effective instruction cannot happen in this kind of grouping.

6). Some districts found some refugee students acting unAmerican and put them in special education without testing their primary language and finding out whether they indeed have a learning disability.

7). One district bilingual office cannot serve all schools. One school that was not being served grouped all immigrant students on their English level, even though the immigrant students from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea had seven or eight years of math classes. The defensive principal argued that the seven or eight years of math was not of much use if the students did not understand English.

8). One school asked the physical education teacher to teach a science class because the teacher knew some Chinese. Since he was not trained to teach science, he did not understand the difference between developing concept and teaching vocabulary. He taught only vocabulary while the LEP refugee and immigrant students needed more sentence structure practice and more concept development. At the same school, a foreign language teacher taught math without textbooks. He happens to speak Chinese and was assigned to that math class.

c). The Problems of the New LEP Students

Many school districts may have experienced a sudden appearance of 30 or 60 Laotian students, many of whom have never been to school, do not know how to hold a pencil, or use the toilet. These districts can hardly find a qualified bilingual aide, not to mention a bilingual teacher.

It has also happened that districts have hired an Asian bilingual teacher for the refugee students. By the next semester, all of the refugee students were gone. Many of these refugees, particularly Laotians move soon following their community leaders. If a district hires a Laotian bilingual aide, it would not have any use of the aide when all Laotian students move to another area. At the same time, the other district

suddenly gets fifty or sixty Laotian students and has a hard time to find a Laotian bilingual aide to teach them.

III. Some Alternatives

It is very difficult for the districts to handle these mounting problems of changing student populations with their limited resources. The school boards, state legislature and Congress should work together and establish a formula so that school districts can financially meet the needs of the changing student population. This formula should provide school districts funds immediately without waiting for a whole school year before anything is done to help the needy students. This assistance should also help districts gain time to carry out the affirmative action plans, racial desegregation, and bilingual requirements.

The schools of education in many universities should make efforts to recruit minority students with bilingual skills to obtain bilingual teaching credentials.

As pointed out in the previous charts, there is a great increase in LEP refugee students in many districts. These individuals have language and culture barriers; a high percentage have never been to school in their lives. They do not know how to communicate with their classmates. They do not know how to follow American non-verbal behavior and customs; they are isolated and looked down upon.

One way to improve the situation is to inservice all the teachers and counselors in the districts; they need help in understanding the culture and educational needs of these students. This way is very expensive and may not be very effective. Many teachers may not be interested in teaching children with a different language and culture and will not be able to develop sensitivity and understanding toward them in a few workshops.

Another way is the newcomer center approach where all the newly arrived non-English speaking students go to the newcomer center for one year with court and state approval for limited segregation to meet the special needs of these students. During

this one year, these students would be taught intensive English as a second language (ESL) with primary language support. They would be given American cultural orientation as well. The approach allows school districts to use their resources more effectively. They can assign into the center teachers who have had experiences with these students, undertand their language, culture and problems of adjusting to American way of life. The center will be able to communicate better with the parents. It provides better grouping for more effective instruction. It saves money, time and headaches and avoids misunderstanding among students, in addition to better services to these students and their families for their transition to American society. After one year, those students, having managed some basic conversational skills and acclimatized to the classroom procedure, some American customs, holiday celebrations and games, should be integrated into regular schools with ESL or bilingual programs. Once in the regular classes, they can, for example, participate in Halloween activities. Otherwise, they are totally left out since they do not have the slightist idea of what it is all about and no one can explain the meaning to them.

This newcomer center approach is not a new idea. San Francisco Unified School District has had these centers for many years with good results.[15]

Still another alternative is the magnet school approach which offers a voluntary program with a specialized focus. The district arranges the experienced bilingual, ESL, and regular teachers at the magnet school for effective use of staff expertise, as well as bilingual and ESL instructional materials and draws LEP students and regular students whose parents want them to learn a foreign language. The LEP students will have intensive ESL classes and content courses with primary language support, in addition to the advantage of mixing with fluent English speaking students who can provide opportunity for LEP students to practise English. The fluent English speakers can have better opportunity to

learn a foreign language. All students at the magnet school will be exposed to multicultural education and have a rich experience in different cultures. Stockton Unified School District has a bilingual magnet school with strong community support.

For counseling services, it is better to have one or two counselors with sympathetic attitudes toward minority students advise all LEP students. Even if this one counselor does not have any experience with LEP students, he or she will gain some understanding of the language and adjustment problems of these students after serving them a few years.

The changing student population puts extra stress on the districts to comply with the requirements of bilingual education, particularly the way of requiring the bilingual teachers. It seems that the present bilingual law puts the responsibility on the classroom teacher. In many ways, it is unfair. When a teacher, having taught more than fifteen years, suddenly finds ten Vietnamese students in the class, he or she must apply for a waiver and learn Vietnamese. The teacher while studying Vietnamese may find the Vietnamese students are gone after two years. Instead, ten Spanish speaking students arrive. The teacher has to apply for waiver again and to agree to study Spanish, still worrying about losing his or her job. The districts are in limbo. They do not know what kinds of students they will have next year. They simply remain out of compliance. This approach of requiring bilingual teachers causes morale problems among teachers and increases resentment against bilingual education. The losers are the LEP students.

If a law cannot be complied with by the districts, it will be revised or repealed through legislation or ignored by districts. This explains why bilingual laws are proposed every year. AB 1329 was passed in 1976. AB 507 was passed in 1980 to amend AB 1329. Many other bilingual education bills were proposed between 1976 and 1980 to replace AB 1329. Now AB 507 has not been fully implemented, yet there are new bilingual

education bills being considered by the legisture to replace AB 507.

One reasonable solution may be that a district that needs twenty bilingual teachers should be given time to hire twenty bilingual teachers and encourage district teachers to study for bilingual credentials, instead of putting twenty teachers on waiver. Using this approach, the district will not be allowed to hire regular teachers without the approval of the district bilingual advisory committee until twenty bilingual teachers are hired. If a district needs a science teacher who is not bilingual, it will have to convince the district bilingual advisory committee to approve the hiring.

Antoher way of improving the situation would be that the districts be given additional funds to hire bilingual teachers. Measures should be taken to keep dedicated teachers from burning out. Asking teachers to apply for waiver is not the way to keep the dedicated teachers in public schools.

One last recommendation is that ESL credentials be considered. As minority and LEP students increase in California, there are many times more classes with a few LEP students with different primary languages than the classes with ten or more LEP students of the same primary language in the same grade level. Many teachers do not know how to teach these students effectively besides giving them "a lot of love." Developing a first language and acquiring a second language involves different approaches and skills particularly in the beginning stages. Teaching standard English to Black students demands linguistic expertise also.[16] If teachers take a few applied linguistic courses and complete ESL credential requirements, thousands of Black students and LEP students who are not in a bilingual class will be benefited. The legislature and the Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing should work together and consider granting an ESL Credential.

Long range planning is needed to solve many problems resulting from the changing ethnic student population. Without constructive attention, more lawsuits and social unrest due to racial tension can be expected and support for public education will be further eroded.

NOTES

[1]I want to thank Dr. Adele Martinez, Dr. Don Glines and Mr. Tirso Serrano for their input but I alone am responsible for the content and errors of this paper.

[2]"Racial and Ethnic Distribution of Students and Staff in California Public Schools, Fall, 1979" is available through the Office of Intergroup Relations, California State Department of Education

[3]Ibid., Table 1.

[4]Ibid., Table 7.

[5]Ibid., p.4

[6]Earlier figures were not very accurate due to the lack of valid and uniform instruments to identify the limited English proficient students.

[7]see "Limited English and Non-English Speaking Students in California 1975", California State Department of Education.

[8]see "DATA/BICAL Report, California State Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Bicultural Education, 1979".

[9]Ibid.

[10]These data were taken from computer printout kept at the Office of Intergroup Relations, California State Department of Education.

[11]In 1973 student ethnic count was categorized into American Indian, Asian, Black, Hispanic and others. The categories of Filipino and White were added in the last few years.

[12]Data were taken from Consolidated Management Services, California State Department of Education.

[13]The district did not report correctly and was out of compliance.

[14]Data were taken from Consolidated Management Services, California State Department of Education. Since Los Angeles USD did not apply for waiver for 1978-79, the total figures were inaccurate and was not cited.

[15]Newsweek, April 14, 1980, p.102

[16]see "proficiency in English Program for the Black Learner", by Thelma J. Duncan, Los Angeles U.S.D., Compensatory Instructional Program Division, unpublished paper.